

**SIX**  
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# THE TRUE NATURE OF MAN

Beginning a series of thirteen talks by Geoffrey Hodson.

The Psalmist propounded the interesting question to the Deity "What is man that Thou art mindful of him?". And the English poet Alexander Pope referred to this fundamental problem concerning the nature of man when he said "The proper study of mankind is man". The teachings of Theosophy enable us to follow this advice with great fullness. For Theosophy teaches not only of the physical, material man but also of his intellectual and spiritual nature and powers.

I am going to put before you as concisely as I can some of the age-old Theosophical teachings about man. What is he? How is he described? The Theosophical definition of man makes him primarily a three-fold being. For he is described as that being in whom highest spirit and lowest matter are united by intellect. Although thus three-fold in essence, man is also said to be manifested in seven ways, or to express himself at seven levels of consciousness and seven degrees of density of matter, through seven appropriate vehicles or bodies. Of these seven bodies of man, the physical, with which we are most familiar, is the most dense, the other six being built of finer and finer gradations of substance until the highest, the most tenuous, the most spiritual body of man is reached. Thus, man is a three-fold immortal spiritual being incarnated in four mortal material bodies.

Let us look at this a little more in detail. The three parts of man's spiritual nature are reflections in him of the will, wisdom and intelligence of the Supreme Deity, the Blessed Trinity. The pertinent teaching concerning both the Deity and man is that they are three-fold. For God, the Trinity, reproduces Himself as the three-fold spiritual soul of man, or, as our Bible puts it, man is made in God's image. But in Theosophy the Deity is in no sense either external to man or in essence different from Him. They are one and indivisible throughout all eternity. And this eternal unity of the spirit of man and the spirit which is God is the great fact concerning man; and in it resides the secret of supreme achievement and the attainment of God-like power and undisturbable peace. This is very, very important, for when the individual fully realizes his unity with God, then the powers of the Cosmos are at his disposal. So, you see, the distinction between the Deity of a universe



and the Deity in man lies neither in their location nor in their essential nature, but only in the degree in which their triple powers are expressed. In God, of course, these are perfected; but in man they become manifest in gradually increasing degree of fullness as his evolution proceeds. Ultimately, they will be fully unfolded in man as they are now in the Deity.

Thus, Theosophy teaches that the destiny of man is fully to make manifest his inherent divine powers.

Now, this brings us to our next thought about man which is that in his divine aspect he is immune from death. The Theosophical solution of the problem of death is that essentially a man is immortal and only the body dies. Only the outer personal nature passes away whilst individuality, capacities, character, interests and affections--all these persist after bodily death. Furthermore, all faculties attained during life are permanent powers of the three-fold inner self. Such then, in part, is man's true nature, his spiritual soul.

Now, we must look at man's four material bodies. In the order of their density, beginning with the most tenuous or subtle, they are: the mental body, composed of mental material, or mind stuff, vehicle of thought. Then his emotional body, composed of somewhat denser material, his vehicle of feeling; his vital or etheric body composed of ether, the subtle fluid permeating all space; and, finally, the densest and most physical of all his bodies, this physical body in which we are now awake. Thus, the triple self is expressed in four bodies: mind, emotion, vitality and flesh.

The question thus arises, doesn't it, why is the human spirit incarnate in a physical body? The purpose of man's existence is, in Theosophy, said to be evolution. And this is a dual process, partly spiritual, partly bodily. Evolution consists on the one hand of the gradual unfoldment from latency to potency of man's three-fold spiritual attributes, and, on the other hand, of the development of his four material vehicles to a condition in which those powers are perfectly expressed. And these two processes are parallel. Inner unfoldment is accompanied by outer development. The unified and harmonized mortal bodies together becoming an ever more worthy temple of the inner God. And this is the

solution of the problem of the purpose of human life, which is glorious in the extreme. The goal of human evolution is the standard of perfection described by St. Paul as "the perfect man, the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ".

We now come to another most important Theosophical idea. The goal of human perfection has already been reached by certain men and women. Such personages are known as World Saviours, Adepts, Masters of the Wisdom. And together, these Great Beings living on our earth constitute the Inner Government of our world. They are the true spiritual teachers and inspirers of men, the august body of "just men made perfect", as St. Paul refers to them, the Great White Brotherhood of Adepts.

How is the state of human perfection or Adeptship attained? Theosophy answers: by means of the experiences in a succession of lives here on earth. The doctrine of rebirth is part of Theosophical teaching. And, furthermore, these successive lives are all connected with each other by the operation of a universal law of cause and effect, compensation, or readjustment.

Let me explain how this works. All actions, feelings and thoughts produce their own natural and perfectly appropriate reactions. These may follow their causes either immediately, or later on in the same life, or in succeeding incarnations. And under this compensatory law, actions motivated by love, service, unselfishness and kindness produce a pleasure and a growing freedom of self-expression which encourage the actor to repeat them. But actions motivated by dislike and greed, selfishness and cruelty produce a pain and an increasing limitation of self expression which discourage the actor from repeating them. So it is said that the law "rules to righteousness". Suffering is not a retribution imposed by the Deity, a punishment from above, nor is it an accidental adversity. All pain is self inflicted, and moreover it is designed to inform the actor of his transgression. The law is, therefore, true and beneficent and educative in its ultimate purpose and effect. St. Paul expressed it in the words "God is not mocked. Whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap."

Is there then a way out of human suffering? Is there a way



of escape from sorrow? Most certainly there is. And Theosophy teaches it very definitely. It is really to be found in our Lord's Sermon on the Mount. It is also in that teaching of the Lord Buddha which is known as the Noble Eight-fold Path. Here are the eight ways of life infallibly leading to enduring happiness as taught by the Lord Buddha: right belief, right thought, right speech, right action, right means of livelihood, right exertion or energy, right remembrance and right meditation. Eight wonderful ways.

Shall I repeat them? They are not easy to remember, are they? Here they are: right belief, right thought, right exertion or energy, right remembrance and right meditation, or, as some people say, right rapture. The Lord Buddha summed up these teachings in the following words: "To cease from sin, to get virtue, to purify the heart, to serve the world." And such are some of the teachings of Theosophy concerning man.

## THE TECHNIQUE OF SPIRITUAL HEALING

Can bodily changes be produced by the powers of the mind and the spirit? Are all diseases susceptible of cure by spiritual healing alone? If so, what is the method of mental and spiritual healing? How may the sufferer cooperate? And is there some simple technique which could be successfully practiced by those who don't pretend to possess any super-normal powers? Theosophy has concise answers to all these interesting questions, and in this talk I shall be dealing with one of the highest and most universal of aspirations--to be able to heal by the powers of mind and of spirit.

The method of spiritual healing is well worthy of careful consideration. And those listeners who might expect me to go straight to the heart of the matter and provide a method and a formula which can be applied with effect straight away I ask please just to be patient while I deal somewhat fully with the profound subject.

From the very first it is important when studying spiritual healing to remember that there are physical causes and physical cures of disease. Those who are seriously ill are advised to consult a reliable physician. At the same time, it has now been scientifically demonstrated that the root causes of many of the sufferings of mankind lie deeper than the physical body. Many are now known to have their origin in man's emotional and mental natures. The emergence and rapid development of what has come to be called psychosomatics, a new branch of medicine, establishes the fact that indeed many diseases have their roots deep in the psychological, mental and spiritual condition of the patient, and that they are therefore susceptible of mental and spiritual healing.

This consideration of the physical effect of thoughts and feelings leads us directly to our subject of spiritual healing. How may we carry this out? If we wish to become spiritual healers what should we do? And especially, what are the parts played by the healer and the sufferer? Can we get full cooperation from the sufferer? The answers to these questions are dependent upon a certain knowledge, knowledge of the true nature of man. And let me just advance the Theosophical idea concerning man first. Then you can understand more about spiritual healing.



What then is man? Theosophy answers that he is primarily a thinker. That's his name. For the very word "man" comes from the Sanskrit word "man" meaning "to think". But man is also a being of emotions and of physical activity; while overshadowing and acting through emotion, word and deed is the innermost self of man, his immortal soul, the divine spirit in him, the very power by which he could learn to heal.

And this brings us to a profound truth, which is that the spiritual soul of man is forever at one with the source of its existence. Man's spirit and God's spirit are one spirit. And when this great truth begins to be realized, when the divine power and presence within man begin to be known, then the mighty power of the God within can be tapped and released for the service of one's fellowman.

The first step then in preparing oneself to become a spiritual or mental healer is self discovery. The innermost self, the divine presence, must be sought by means of regular daily meditation. And thereafter, and by the regular practice of spiritual healing, the faculty may be developed of drawing upon the power within one and transmitting it through oneself in the name of God for the help of those in need. We are thus presented with the concept of man as a power unit through whom the divine creative life-force flows continually as a mighty power. Then his spiritual nature may be indeed regarded as relaying throughout his whole being power from the inexhaustible universal source which is God.

And here comes something very important. The unimpeded rhythmic flow of this divine energy throughout man's nature is essential to perfect health and happiness. For the creative life of God is a mighty and irresistible force. When it flows freely through a man it vitalizes him, empowers him and can heal him when he's sick. But resistance to this force in thought and feeling and action sets up friction, sets up discordance and distortion which, in their turn, can cause physical malfunction and disease.

Now, we have a fairly clear definition of health. Something like this. In terms of dynamics, health is the unimpeded, rhythmic flow of power, life and consciousness from the inner spiritual self of man throughout all his whole nature. Ill health comes to us when somewhere in our nature

a condition exists which obstructs or diverts from its proper channels the universal life force. Spiritual healing can remove these interior barriers, can clear away the obstructions in the mental, emotional and physical bodies of man. Then the inner life-force flows through, "and mightily", as the Psalmist said, "and sweetly ordereth all things".

Barriers do get set up in our minds and in our emotional nature. They are generated by our thoughts and feelings of hate, dislike, desire to dominate, bitterness, anger, resentment, malice and unforgiveness. These, especially when habitual, are veritable poisons. And they can poison the bodily system. A simple but sure recipe to good health and happiness is to cease from hurting others in thought and word and deed.

However, there is another way in which we bring ill health to ourselves. It is by the misuse of our bodies. For the body is indeed a temple of the Godself within, as St. Paul said, and is the potential vehicle by means of which the inner self gains the experience necessary for its evolutionary progress. So we see that health depends upon ethics; upon right conduct in thought, word, deed; upon diet as well and all the habits of life.

Now we see the healer's true purpose. It is to help the sufferer to reorient his mind and, more especially, to adopt the right attitude towards life. The healer's task is to help to remove the interior barriers, to restore the harmonious flow of the inner life of God throughout the whole nature of the sufferer. Successfully applied, spiritual healing brings down an immense flood of divine life which can revitalize and heal mind, emotions and body.

Now what is a good method for achieving this and for helping sufferers to clear themselves of these errors within and without their conduct of life? Let me describe one actual process of spiritual healing. And this can be used, by the by, whether the sufferers are present or not. Here then is a simple, but highly effective, method, which can be used either when one is alone praying for people or working with a group of spiritual healers.

First, then, it is necessary to have a list of the names, Christian and surname, of those to be healed. Then, in com-



plete privacy and with the body relaxed, turn the thoughts in powerful concentration, reverently, to a recognized healing source. For most Christians, of course, this will be the Lord Christ, the great Healer of men, will it not. So we Christians would visualize the Lord Christ clearly as we can and reverently draw near to Him, seeking to realize His presence and be channels for His healing power. And then, with about half minute pauses for concentration and visualization after each phrase, repeat aloud and with powerful intent this beautiful invocation. Here are the words. Remember we have turned our thoughts reverently to our Lord Christ, if that is our intention:

May the healing power of the Lord Christ descend upon the sufferers.

And then you will mention the Christian and surname of each of them, with a five second pause after each name. During the pause visualize the sufferer as radiantly well, as in the very presence of the Lord Christ, flooded by His glorious healing power and golden light. Then, after all the names have been mentioned, continue, saying:

May Christ's healing power descend upon them all and may the Holy Angels encompass them.

Another pause there, visualizing that descent and the ministry of the Angels. And finally say:

May the light of Christ's love enfold them forever. Amen.

And then, those who sincerely, selflessly and regularly follow this procedure will indubitably prove to themselves that any reasonably intelligent, unselfish person can by these means heal effectively by the powers of the mind and the spirit.

## MIND, EMOTION AND HEALTH

Why is it that although rapid progress is being made in many other branches of science medical science still fails successfully to prevent and to cure so many diseases? Why are the incidence and the mortality of diseases on the increase today? Why don't the advances in diagnosis, the development of more and more intricate and sensitive instruments and the remarkable progress being made in surgery and hospital techniques bring to mankind increasing immunity from sickness and more certain methods of the prevention, treatment and cure of disease?

These are serious questions, for unfortunately a growing sickliness is showing itself among modern civilized humanity. Every individual, every family, is continually faced with the possibility that mental or physical and often mortal disease will strike them. Disabling and painful diseases and epidemics are the almost certain lot of present day man.

What is the theosophical contribution to this problem of the increasing sickliness of man today? And that, despite the great advances on almost every other frontier of science. Well, that theosophical contribution consists of knowledge, particularly of two facts in nature. One of these facts is that of the existence and operation of the law of cause and effect, of action or reaction, or compensation. And the other fact is that man is a complex, seven-fold being. He is made up of will, wisdom, intelligence (his spiritual nature) and mentality, emotion, vital energy and physical body (his mortal nature). And naturally, interaction between these various parts of man continually occur.

Let us look at these two ideas--the law of cause and effect and the seven-fold nature of man. The first of them, cause and effect, is described as the law inherent in the nature of things, the ultimate law of the universe, the source, the fount, the origin of all other laws under which effects follow causes. In the East, as many of you must now know, this law is called by a Sanskrit word, Karma. Karma is said to operate continuously upon man, every one of whose actions produces an appropriate reaction. This operation of the law is, however, modified from hour to hour, from day to day and from life to life by his later actions. Now, let us apply this teaching of action and reaction to the problem of dis-



ease. What is found? Well, it is found, putting it simply, that persistent selfishness and cruelty bring disease and sorrow while love and service bring health and happiness under the law of cause and effect. And this knowledge, simple though it does sound, is regarded by some as the very heart of the science of health and happiness.

Our Lord would seem to have supported this view of disease; for, after healing the helpless man at Bethesda, he said to him "Go, sin no more", as if to imply that the root cause was sinning and the sure prevention was to cease from sinning. The answer to the problems of the universality of human suffering and of the strange selectivity under which some suffer and others do not is also provided by knowledge of the operation of the exact law of cause and effect or sowing and reaping. As St. Paul said, "God is not mocked, for whatsoever a man soweth that shall he also reap". Some people have, by cruelty, sown disease; and later they reap the same.

The second theosophical idea which may be applied to the solution of the problem of health and disease concerns the continual interaction between the various parts of man, especially the spirit, the mind and the emotions on the one hand and his physical body on the other. Dr. Alexis Carrel, in his book MAN, THE UNKNOWN, says: "Envy, hate, fear, when these sentiments are habitual, are capable of starting organic changes and genuine diseases."

It has been proved, he says, that a moral shock may cause marked changes in the blood. Thought can generate organic lesions. The instability of modern life, the ceaseless agitation and the lack of security create states of consciousness which bring about nervous and organic disorders of the stomach and the intestines, for example. Such diseases are almost unknown in social groups where life is simpler and not so agitated, where anxiety is less constant. Likewise, says the good Doctor, those who keep the peace of their inner self in the midst of tumult are immune from nervous and organic disorders. He closes this remarkable paragraph with these words: "Man thinks, invents, loves, suffers, admires and prays with his brain and all his organs."

As a result of the progress of medical research in this direction, a relatively new and most interesting branch of

medicine, psychosomatics, has come into existence. This new attitude recognizes the fact which Theosophy has always taught--that the human being is indeed complex and mysterious, a creature whose thoughts, emotions, brain and tissues are constantly reacting upon one another.

We do some things deliberately. We run, work or eat by our own will. We decide to wash the breakfast dishes. But we do not decide to blush with embarrassment or double our heart beat with anger. These actions are controlled by the involuntary or automatic nervous system. Such deep feelings as hate, fear, and the need for love, of which we may be wholly unconscious at the time, can nevertheless find bodily expression through this involuntary system. If a mother, for example, is worried over her children's health or is afraid they are not getting along well enough in school she may have an attack of indigestion. She suffers from an upset stomach because she is depressed and anxious. Moreover, if she continues for a sufficient period of time thus to make herself ill, real danger to the tissues may ensue.

A person with a possibly serious gastro intestinal complaint may go to a doctor, who may find that the illness is really caused by emotional tension. Whereupon, the doctor practices psychosomatic medicine. He treats not only the physical ailment, but looks for the cause in the patient's mental or emotional structure, or in their relationship with their environment.

About one-third of the patients, it has been found, who come to physicians for treatment have no bodily disorder to account for their sicknesses. When one realizes the implication behind these cold statistics showing that a great part of human illnesses is rooted in causes which cannot be adequately treated by an ordinary physician, then the picture becomes truly shocking.

Psychiatry, pscho-analysis and the newly opened field of psychosomatic medicine are partial answers to the now admitted limitations of traditional medical practice. It is not enough for a doctor to look upon a patient nowadays as an anatomical and physiological mechanism. He must also see him as a human being possessed of loves and hates, urges and passions, all of them capable of deeply disturbing both soul and body. It is precisely because of this interaction that the



spiritual understanding of a minister should be joined to the medical understanding of a doctor. And there should also be added a thorough knowledge of the social and economic forces that act upon a patient's emotional and physical stability.

Now, what can we do about this? How can we avoid getting psychosomatic illnesses?

Here are eight rules on the art of living given by Dr. Charles A. Schindler, chief physician of the Monroe Clinic in the State of Wisconsin. Eight rules for health.

1. Don't continually look for trouble.
2. Learn to like work, thus avoiding tension arising when work is disliked.
3. Have a hobby which gets your mind off the work tension.
4. Learn to like people. Avoid grudges against anyone, for this is disastrous. We have to live with people, so let us learn to like them.
5. Be satisfied when the situation is such that you cannot readily and easily change it. If you can't easily adjust the situation, then adjust yourself to it.
6. Learn to accept adversity. Don't let it defeat you. Don't brood on trouble and don't wallow in self pity.
7. Learn to say the cheerful, humorous thing. Never say the mean or cruel thing. Help others to feel better and you'll feel better yourself.
8. Meet problems with decision. Decide what you are going to do and then stop thinking about it.

By these means, says Dr. Schindler, harmful mental and emotional habits will be avoided and physical health will be far more easily attained and maintained.

I feel that I would like just to accentuate Rule 7. Let me repeat it. Learn to say the cheerful, humorous thing. Never say the mean or cruel thing. Help others to feel better and you will feel better yourself.

## THOUGHTS ARE THINGS

When thought processes are studied by means of trained supersensory power it is found that four effects are produced. Two of them are upon the thinker, two outside. On the thinker, thought tends to change the person into the likeness of that upon which he thinks. If the thoughts are long continued and repeated, a habit is formed. Outside of the thinker thought waves are sent out, and these impinge upon recipients and tend to cause them to think in a similar manner. This is the theosophical explanation of telepathy.

There is, however, a rather peculiar second effect of thought produced outside of the thinker. A description of this second effect may sound somewhat strange to you, but it is so interesting that I have decided to put it before you. In addition to the radiation of thought forces, the action of thought also produces an actual form made of mind stuff, sometimes called a "thought-form".

What do such forms look like? Well, they are of two classes. One of these consists of exact reproductions in the matter of the mental plane of objects or persons about which one is thinking; and such thought-images will be clear or vague according to the clarity or the vagueness of the thought. The other class of thought-form is produced not by concrete thinking of a form, but by abstract thought.

Let us first, however, consider forms produced by concrete thought. Supposing, for example, you thought of yourself. What would happen? In the upper portion of your mental aura and a little in front of you, there would appear a thought-image of yourself as you are accustomed to think of yourself. This form would perhaps be about a foot to eighteen inches high and would tend to fade out as soon as you turned the thought away from yourself. The longer a thought is held the more stable is the thought-form.

Indeed, it is possible to construct thought-forms which will last for centuries. And this actually happens, especially when, in addition to powerful, long-continued, repeated thought, certain ceremonials are performed and invocations uttered. The mental world of our planet still contains thought-forms which were constructed centuries ago in ancient civilizations by ceremonial action and strong thought, wheth-



er good, bad, white or black,

With regard to the thought-form you make when you are thinking about yourself, however. If you should think of yourself as being in some other place, your thought-form would travel to that place with the speed of light. Under certain conditions, these mental self-portraits, these projected thought-forms, become visible. There are many attested cases of what is called bi-location, meaning "being seen in two places at once".

What has happened in bi-location, as it is called, is that you have been thinking very strongly of yourself as being in the company of someone else to whom you are attached or in whom you take an interest. Your concentrated thought will produce a form of yourself which actually goes to the presence of your friend. And, if he is at all psychically sensitive or receptive just at the time, he might either find himself thinking strongly of you or he might feel your presence near him and even see your thought-form as if you were actually present in the room.

One of the commonest examples of bi-location is the projection and the perception at a distance of the thought-form of someone who is in the process of dying. In his last moments, the dying person's strong thought of someone in another place can produce an easily visible thought-form. Later on, when the news of the death arrives, the loved one remembers that just at the time of death he thought he saw, or perhaps felt, the near presence of the deceased person. Not infrequently, relatives of soldiers killed in battle have the experience of seeing the soldier just at the time when he was killed in combat. This is because when he was struck and driven suddenly out of his body, his first thought was of someone he loved. This could have the effect of causing a thought-form of himself to travel swiftly into the presence of the person of whom he thought.

So one of the two kinds of thought-forms, made every time we think, is a replica built of mind-stuff of the person or object of which we are thinking.

The second class of thought-forms, as I have said, consists of those produced by abstract thought such as thoughts of love, beauty, truth, unity or time. You will notice that

there are no forms for those ideas. So some appropriate and expressive form appears within the aura and even floats above the head of the thinker.

Supposing, moved by affection, one mentally decided to protect someone in danger, shall we say a soldier in the battle area. A form, a definite form built of mind-stuff expressive of love and protection would then appear in the aura of the thinker. What would it look like? Probably like a winged sphere. The sphere would be rose colored, expressive of the love which is the inspiring motive; and the two wings would be golden yellow, representing the action of thought which is the propellant power. Such a form would flash towards the recipient and would hover in his neighborhood and slowly discharge its protective power.

Though only a very powerful thinker and trained occultist could produce a form which would ward off a missile, even an untrained person can, by love, prayer and intense thought send a protective force to shield anyone known to be in danger. How would it operate? Well, the person in danger might unconsciously be caused or moved to turn backwards or forwards, step to one side, thus avoiding some danger either on the ground or in the air.

So, you see, thoughts are indeed things. And the thought power of man is an exceedingly potent agency. The actual formation of one of these thought-forms is vividly described in a great theosophical book which I do recommend to you. It is called "Thought Forms" by C. W. Leadbeater. He was a great seer and wrote of what he really saw.

He explained that the effect produced by thinking is of a most striking character. The thought seizes upon the plastic mental essence and moulds it instantly into a living thing of appropriate form--a being which, when once thus created, is in no way under the control of its creator but lives out a life of its own, the length of which is appropriate to the intensity of the thought and proportionate to the strength of the wish which called it into existence. It lasts just as long as the thought force holds it together. Most people's thoughts are so fleeting and indecisive that the thought-forms created by them last only a few minutes or a few hours. However, an oft repeated thought or an earnest wish will form a thought-form whose existence may extend to many days.



Since the ordinary man's thoughts refer very largely to himself, his thought forms remain hovering about him, and constantly tend to provoke a repetition of the idea which they represent. A man, therefore, who frequently dwells on one wish often forms for himself a mental attendant, as it were, which, constantly fed by fresh thought, may haunt him for years, ever gaining more and more strength and influence over him. It will easily be seen that if the desire be an evil one the effect upon his moral nature may be of the most disastrous character.

There are other kinds of thoughts which we are advised to avoid. One consists of destructive thought and speech about another person's character. This is gossip, which I think to be one of the cruellest evils in the world. Somebody has called gossip one of the seven deadly sins. For it's not just small talk, is it? It can be a wrecker of lives. And when a group of people get together and think and talk critically, destructively, viciously, about the same person or subject, they generate a very powerful current of their united thought force. This reaches their victim and inevitably makes his or her life much harder to live. Calumny, mental or verbal, travels like waves, and no one knows when or where it will stop. There ought to be a law, don't you think, against cruel, destructive, vicious gossip. I think so.

Another kind of thought against which we are warned is bitterness. I am only too well aware that there is in human experience and human life much which can make one bitter and can constitute a very real test, of human danger. But, as Theosophy teaches, we should try never to become either cynical or bitter. Someone has beautifully written these words: "To be able to stand in the midst of darkness and live as though all about you was light--that is the final test of the human spirit." Isn't that a splendid ideal? And of great practical value. For all negative and destructive thoughts are harmful both to the thinker and those against whom they may be directed.

Fortunately for us, it is possible to exercise complete control over the powers of the mind. Theosophy describes the methods which, if applied, enable us to control our thinking and our emotions and so to rebuild our characters to make of us radiant, ever helpful, noble human beings.

## HABITS AND HOW TO CHANGE THEM

Habits are formed by the repetition of one kind of thought, the continued experience of one kind of sensation or emotion and the constant expression of these in physical action. Together these three--repeated thought, repeated feeling and action--form a habit. If the repetition continues long enough, the habit can become stronger than the man and force him into its indulgence.

Again theosophical knowledge proves to be very important, for human personality is partly made up from habits. In one sense we as mortal men are our habits, and our habits are ourselves. How, then, is an improvement to be brought about? By the right use of the formative power of thought. Thought-power is the major means whereby the change may be achieved. What, then, is the method?

But first, let us see how habits come to be formed. Most habitual action has been preceded by habitual thought. When the two--action and thought--are continually performed, a brain path or nerve path leading to the motor nerves is "cut" by the thought-energy employed. The next time the thought of performing that action arises, a weaker impulse will suffice to move it over this path which is already marked out; for the resistance and the inertia of the body have become somewhat reduced. This weaker impulse is all that is now necessary to cause one to act, to carry out the desire or idea. Eventually, if this process is repeated often enough the nerve cells in the brain and nervous system become so organized and unified that the resultant behavior becomes almost automatic. In the case of an evil habit, the resultant impulsive action can be disastrous.

Aside from this development of habitual action as a result of habitual thought, there is another development in habit. It has been discovered by means of trained supersensory investigation that habits set up patterns in the mental body, the vehicle of man which is built of mind-stuff.

Every time we think we make a change in our mind body, establish in it a tendency to vibrate at the new rate, and each time more easily. This continues until the physical and mental bodies have both become habituated to the pursuance of a certain idea or a particular line of thought leading



to physical conduct. In this way, then, habits are formed and, as some of us have found out, can become very strong indeed. Deeply ingrained habits, when of an undesirable kind, can seriously affect one's health, happiness and progress in life.

Can such thoroughly established habits be broken? Of course they can. And here again theosophical teaching can be of the greatest practical value. The way of self reformation is simply to think about a new act, or set of acts, which one desires to perform, thus beginning to form the new habit. One should not concentrate so much on conquering the existing habits, but rather on developing the opposite desirable actions, whatever they may be. Self-cure, then, consists of a reverse operation of the same process by which the original habit was formed. Constant mental repetition of the desired quality implants it in the mind and in the brain. Eventually it becomes so well established there that it quite naturally crowds the old habit out of existence.

If we will examine our feelings, thoughts, and qualities of character we shall find that they can be expressed in two opposite ways, one positive and the other negative, one desirable and one undesirable. Here are a few of the many positive-negative pairs: liking and disliking (love and hate) courage and fear, happiness and depression, humility and conceit, poised self-control and anger, self control and self indulgence, purity and impurity.

Now, as we have seen, continued negative expression of the forces of thought and emotion can lead to habitual vice. But by constantly dwelling in dynamic creative imagination upon the positive expression of the same force we can build the desired virtue into our makeup. Thus by concentrating our thoughts upon them we can build quality after quality, virtue and power into the fabric of our character. For in every weakness resides its opposite power.

We need not be unduly distressed by strong desires, therefore; for, by applying the knowledge which Theosophy gives, we can make "flowers out of apparent weeds, rainbows out of seeming darknesses, and triumphs out of frustrations"\* And Emerson said "A weed is a plant the virtues of which have not yet been discovered."

\*THE LOTUS FIRE: G. S. Arundale

This theosophical guidance in the eradication of bad habits is not only important as knowledge, but is also of great practical value. As we all know, it is possible for habitual irritation and anger, for example, to develop into sheer bad temperedness, which can on occasion mount into a veritable white rage. If we are practical, then under such circumstances we will use our thought power to overcome such harmful, even dangerous tendencies. For we know that we can do this by redirecting into constructive channels of goodwill and control the destructive energy of such habits as irritability and anger.

After all, isn't it rather foolish to get angry? To be angry when things cannot be helped only makes them worse. To be angry when people disagree with your views is to discredit the worth of other people's ideas. To be angry when your conscience tells you that you are wrong is to fight a losing battle. Therefore it is obviously a good thing to conquer anger.

This is done by using those teachings of Theosophy which concern the two observed effects of thought upon the thinker. These effects, you remember, are first, to turn the thinker temporarily into a reflection of that upon which he thinks, and second--if long continued--to form a habit. Good habits and good character are formed, then, by right thinking, meaning constructive, harmonious thinking, and by concentration upon the qualities of character which are desired.

Thought also produces effects outside of the thinker. The human mind is, in fact, a mental broadcaster and receiver. Every time we think we send out a definite energy which by mental vision can be observed as a force rushing out from the mind and brain in mento-electrical waves. Physically these can be measured, of course, by the electro-encephalograph.

These waves of thought force are vibrating on the characteristic frequencies of both the thinker and the thought. If one is thinking only generally then the thought waves, travelling with the speed of light, go out equally in all directions. The distance to which they travel depends upon the intensity and the clarity of the thought and the length of time of concentration upon it. The longer and stronger the thought process, the further the waves of thought force will travel. If, however, the thought is turned to some definite



place or person, then a kind of beam effect like a radio beam comes into operation. In that case most of the thought energy is concentrated upon the recipient.

Such is the theosophical explanation of telepathy. Simply put, thought transference is brought about by the generation of a thought energy which travels from the brain and mind of the thinker into those of the recipient.

The great importance of thought control and speech control now becomes obvious, does it not? Private opinion creates public opinion. Public opinion overflows eventually into national behavior. And, as things are now, national behavior can make or mar the world. That is why private opinions, thoughts and feelings, and even private conversations expressing them are so extremely important.

Here is a closing suggestion. In these days of strain, hurry and tension, it is very valuable to form the habit of taking ten minutes or a quarter of an hour every day alone in mental and physical quietude. Then we may withdraw our thoughts from the external, ever changing physical world around us, outside of us, and fix them strongly upon the very highest and noblest subjects we can think of, the great interior and eternal truths.

One such truth is the omnipresence of God Who is everywhere, within and without, sustaining us always or, as we say, "and underneath are the everlasting arms".\* By dwelling in such thought upon the Divine Presence it is possible to attain to serenity of mind. And it is possible to know by personal direct experience that the Power and Life of God are everywhere around and within us; that indeed underneath are the "everlasting arms".

In one of our daily quiet times we might well repeat and meditate thoughtfully upon the words of the poet:

"Speak to Him thou for He hears,  
And spirit with spirit can meet.  
Closer is He than breathing,  
And nearer than hands and feet." \*\*

\* DEUT.XXX111:27

\*\*THE HIGHER PANTHEISM: Tennyson

## HAPPINESS IN LOVE

Is Theosophy a theory of life only? Or does it give a practical guidance in the conduct of our daily lives and in our search for happiness, particularly for happiness in marriage? Does it answer such questions as: What are the chief causes of failure and unhappiness in love, marriage and parenthood? What are the laws governing success and lasting happiness, and how may these blessings be insured to us. Just what is the information which will help us?

It consists, I personally believe, of knowledge of the nature of man, of the purpose for his existence, and of the means whereby that purpose is fulfilled. Without some measure of that knowledge the questions concerning happiness in life and love and marriage are practically unanswerable. Indeed it is just this lack of knowledge which is at the root of unhappiness and failure in human relationships.

Perhaps at this point, however, it may be objected that such intellectual processes are utterly foreign to the experience of love, and that no one would marry at all if such careful planning and examination of faults, failings and purposes were carried out. Incompatibility of temperament and character defects, it may be urged, can be dealt with after marriage and must not be allowed to mar the happinesses of first falling in love. Life, it is said, is not a matter of cut and dried rules. Lovers are inwardly and often irresistibly moved. Many of the happiest marriages are indeed planned and carried out on the spur of the moment, as it were.

Well, there may be some truth in this, but the percentage of broken and unhappy marriages is high and grows higher. Perfect happiness of both partners is rare. Life does after all follow law; and wisdom consists of knowledge and obedience to natural law. Someone ~~has~~ rather cleverly said, "happiness is no laughing matter."

Furthermore, a pressing social problem of our modern world consists of the alarming rise in the divorce rate. Divorce can be a most tragic circumstance both for the married couple and especially for any children of the marriage. The rise in the divorce rate in many countries is indeed alarming. Here in America, back in 1940, one marriage in five



was broken. In 1946 it was one in four and this rate seems to be still rising. Young people are well advised, therefore, to study human nature, especially their own, and to note those human traits which are likely to produce happy unions and those which are not.

This is very important. For the love that endures is built upon a certain knowledge of principles and a community of interests, ideals, standards and tastes. True and lasting happiness in love and marriage--as also in comradeship between those of the same or opposite sex--depends upon knowledge of facts about man and upon the existence in both partners of certain mutually harmonious traits of character and attitudes toward life.

What are these principles? What does Theosophy teach? Well, it says that the truth concerning man and his life here on earth is this. In his innermost nature the true man behind the bodily veil is a spiritual being, eternal, immortal and indestructible. He assumes the vesture of mortality, the physical body, in order to complete a great pilgrimage whose goal is the attainment of the stature of the perfect man. A succession of physical lives provides the time, the experience and the opportunities necessary to the attainment of perfection. You may remember that St. Paul defines this objective of human existence in these words: "Till we all come in the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ."

Let us now apply this theosophical knowledge to the solution of the problems of love, of marriage, of parenthood and of lasting happiness. In the course of man's successive lives, links of varying degrees of intimacy are formed between individuals. These bonds from former lives tend to serve to draw them together again life after life. In some cases a deep attachment is formed and it is this which, renewed life after life, can develop into a deep and abiding affection. The burgeoning of deep love in any given life is nearly always due to an instinctual remembrance of a former bond. Behind every story of true love are many stories of varied love relationships in earlier lives, and these need not necessarily have been restricted to love between opposite sexes. They are, however, very selective and tend to be renewed life after life. Such are the theosophical answers to

questions concerning the true nature of love and the varying degrees of depth, and the strange selectivity of the birth of human love.

Why, then, does love sometimes endure and sometimes fade? Because these successive lives of man are linked together under the operation of the law of cause and effect. Every action produces its appropriate reaction. Every experience is the product of preceding activity. Happiness and fulfilment in any human endeavour are largely due to the sincerity, the continuity, the fidelity and the general success of preceding endeavours in former lives in similar directions. Fidelity in love thus wins fidelity, just as infidelity brings infidelity. Indeed, all human experience is governed by exact law. Nowhere in human life is there the element of luck or chance, not in the slightest degree. St. Paul also said: "God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap."

From this it will be seen that marriage can be one of the finest evolutionary aids to the fulfilment of man's pilgrimage to perfection, which is the supreme purpose of his existence. Love, marriage and parenthood are educative experiences of the greatest possible value to the pilgrim God, which is the Spiritual Soul of man.

How, then, can young people be aware if they really are in love? The first task of parents whose advice is sought, as also of those who believe themselves to be in love, is to make certain whether or not the attraction so strongly felt really is the love which will endure through all the strain inseparable from the attempt of two people to live harmoniously together for the rest of their lives. Parents may usefully point out, of course, that love at first sight is not always a sure guide. It may be true love or it may be not. Lovers should be sure before they leap; and time is as good a test as any. Lovers need not be afraid of an irrevocable loss if they wait; for, as Seneca said: "Nothing grows again more easily than love."

However, some questions which may be applied as tests of real love are somewhat like these:

Do you have a great number of things that you like to do together? Mental affinity is very important. You need not think alike, but you should agree on principles.



Do you have a feeling of pride when you compare your friend with anyone else you know? Does he or she evoke your deep respect?

Even when you quarrel, do you still enjoy being together?

Have you a strong desire to please your friend, and are you quite glad to give way on your own preferences?

Does he, or she, have the qualities you would like to have in your children? Character, you know, is very important.

Are you certain in your own heart? If you are in doubt, then you are not wholly in love.

An affirmative answer to all of these questions is the ideal. Those who are not sure about any of them take a great risk if they marry.

The true nature of love should be realized. Deep true love, you know, produces a physical, emotional, mental and spiritual upliftment and an indescribable happiness and expansion of heart and mind. The companionship of the beloved engenders a sense of moreness, fulfilment, harmony and bliss.

How unfortunate it is if from such a beginning failure is the result. It need not be if the lovers will study the great principles of life and the meaning and purpose of human existence. And study themselves as well.

Now let me close with a rather charming verse which beautifully describes the nature of true love.

There are many kinds of love,  
As many kinds of light,  
And every kind of love makes  
A glory in the Light.  
There is love that stirs the heart  
And love that gives it rest,  
But the love that leads life upwards  
Is the noblest and the best.

With this true love in their hearts, those who become engaged may feel reasonably assured of happiness in marriage.

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